

**Human Rights Commission Meeting**  
**January 16, 2014, 6:30-8:30 pm, Bangs Community Center**

Present: Gregory Bascomb, Emily Jung, Lois Raj, Liam Brodigan, Kathleen Anderson, Ingrid Askew, Carol Ross, Sid Ferreira

Absent: Damon Mallory

Others: Jon Weissman, Maria Geryk, Kimberly Stender, Mike Morris

Meeting called to order by Gregory Bascomb at 6:30 pm

1. Agenda Review/Additions: Added "meeting with town manager" and "Russ Vernon-Jones"
2. Review of December 2013 minutes/acceptance: December 2013 minutes accepted.
3. Old Business

**Draft Resolution on Right to Organize** – received most updated draft of resolution. Motion for this draft to be approved by the Commission and forwarded to the Town Manager: accepted.

4. New Business

**Community Engagement Discussion – Dr. Maria Geryk** – school community committed to human rights and equity. Focus on the whole system – policies, procedures, practices – hiring practices, are they equitable? How are we leveraging the recruitment of staff that is more representative of the student body? Development for the administrative team and staff. More emphasis on student voice - share own unique experiences. How do we design classrooms and how to ensure all students have needed access to information and materials? Trying to connect with community members, to find resources that we, the school system, do not have. Comply with new laws that regard transgender students; discussion about gender neutral bathrooms, lockers.

**Mike Morris** – adult development – district instructional leadership team – professional development of staff and administrative team – focusing on equity. Start by tracking – developing skill to understand how different people are being treated. What does it mean to be cultural proficient? How do we define actions that show cultural competency, proficiency? Having the lens of privilege is the core focus. Identifying sexual orientation, class, race, gender, and disability. What the privileges of a certain dominant group are? Principals and staff and all adults are engaged in this training. Focus for the spring: when administrators are in the classroom, they can give feedback regarding these issues and comment on action on the part of teachers. Book they have been using: Claud Steel, Whistling Vivaldi - about how the research of stereotypes, and how being a member of an oppressed group can impact level of ability, even without direct actions against a person. Support families that do not have access to resources → Dr. Guevarra has started a family center.

**Kimberly Stender** – community partnerships and volunteers. Welcome all community members to come into school as volunteers. 600 CORId volunteers in the schools. Partnerships – going out to community: civic organizations, the Rotary, Disability Advisory Committee, Five Colleges, and other organizations in town – acts as a conduit, between schools and Amherst community. Project Backpack – donations of school supplies and backpacks, income-eligible families get these backpacks. First Day Celebration. African-American and Latino achievement night. Voices from our schools. ARPS Family Center this September: steps to success – enables at risk students and families to get the academic help they need. Adult workshops. Intergenerational equity cohort - group of students, based on Calvin Terrell. Our action plan: HS MSAN Scholars go to 5<sup>th</sup> grade, advising them to find their voice and become leaders. Molly Mead and Biddy Martin and White

House – Amherst College and ARPS will develop a partnership and begin communication to talk about how the College can help students make college a reality

**Discipline Disparity** – discriminates against poor people, with disability, of color; discussion about this issue and how it needs to and will be addressed. Input from several guests and commission members. Conclusion: Superintendent open to suggestions and collaboration with the HRC – Carol, Kathleen, and Emily will organize and conduct meetings with Geryk regularly and report to commission

**Project Unspeakable Update** – Friday Night 7 pm Middle School – refreshments? Sid will do the introduction and opening. If there is a Q&A, commissioners will help facilitate it. Emily will contact local bakeries for donations for the reception.

**“Coming Together: Facing Racism. Building Fairness and Connection “** – introduction. Talk about it more next month.

**BHM Project** – no painting, but an art contest project. Information to institutions, organizations, etc. to reach out to artists. Mail submissions to Town PO Box. Whatever medium with a guideline of size. Quote as a prompt? Post art work on all the businesses, and perhaps offer cash prizes.

- Meeting Adjourned 8:30 PM  
Emily Jung, notetaker